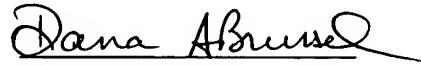


**REMARKS**

By the present amendment, the Applicants have amended the specification to identify the present application's claim to priority and have amended claim 23 to correct a typographical error. It is respectfully submitted that the claims pending in the application do not introduce new subject matter, are fully supported by the application and are patentable over the prior art. Prompt and favorable consideration of these claims is earnestly sought.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that all claims pending in the application, namely claims 1-23, are in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner desire a telephonic interview to resolve any outstanding matters, he is sincerely invited to contact the undersigned at (631) 501-5713.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Dana A. Brussel  
Reg. No. 45,717  
Attorney for Applicants

Carter, DeLuca, Farrell & Schmidt, LLP  
445 Broad Hollow Road - Suite 225  
Melville, New York 11747  
Tel.: (631) 501-5713  
Fax: (631) 501-3526

**Send correspondence to:**  
Chief Patent Counsel  
Tyco Healthcare Group  
150 Glover Avenue  
Norwalk, CT 06856